

THE COLLEGE OF RICHARD COLLYER
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE
HELD ON Wednesday 12 June 2024 at 16.00

Present: Karl Banister, Sarah Ediss, Susan Martineau, Dom Valente

In attendance: Members of SMT - Ian Dumbleton (FD), Dan Lodge (Principal)
Rob Hussey (VP Curriculum) Items 5 only

Russha Sellings (Director of Governance)

External attendees: Scott McCready (Wylie + Bisset) Item 6 only

In the Chair: Dom Valente

1. Chair Introductions and Apologies for Absence

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all members. Karl Banister and Sarah Ediss joined the meeting on Teams. Susan Martineau was not present at the start of the meeting joining in Item 5. The meeting was quorate. The VP (Curriculum) was present to provide relevant updates.

2. Declarations of Interest

None declared with respect of the agenda items.

3. Minutes of the meeting 6 March 2024

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved without amendment.

4. Matters Arising

(not already covered on the agenda)

Item 5a(ii) Safeguarding action following internal review

The GD confirmed on behalf of the VP (Pastoral) that the action had been resolved.

5. English EQR

Paper: English EQR

The VP (Curriculum) provided highlights of the report presented in the Ofsted format. The focus on this subject was due to results being in the range of national average and opportunities for improved outcomes. There were some areas of strength to draw from the review including clear subject knowledge, strong enrichment support and GCSE results, however members were concerned about the number of areas identified for improvement. There was robust challenge on how the next steps would be implemented and monitored to ensure timely action. The VP (Curriculum) agreed that a structural approach would be needed. Consistency in subject delivery was a key factor and the new Head of Subject would examine the schemes of work for students to support those of all abilities including the more able. Lesson observations would provide verification. This would also be supported by the newly appointed Director of Faculty who would bring a wealth of experience from another high performing SFC. English was one of the areas identified for specific coaching work for Heads of Subject by an external consultant which was scheduled to take place before the end of term. However, the VP (Curriculum) cautioned that key actions may take some time to embed.

Following a discussion about governance oversight and risk management, it was agreed that the progress monitoring would be referred to the Q&C Committee responsible for standards. This would be reported through education KPIs or an exceptions report. The Principal added that any significant areas would feature in the SAR and continue as targets in the QIP for the next academic

year. The VP (Curriculum) was also confident that PR1 results in the autumn term should provide some assurances. *(Actions: VP Curriculum)*

[16.23 Susan Martineau arrived at the meeting]

More generally, members asked about sharing learnings across other subject areas. The VP (Curriculum) said it was usual practice for subject leads to share themes and good practice.

[16.27 the VP (Curriculum) departed the meeting]

6. Internal Audit Updates

[16.29 Scott McCready was welcomed to the meeting]

i) Progress of final review (ILR)

Scott advised the draft ILR report was in progress and subject to final checks. The timing of the ILR review was discussed and the FD confirmed this was the most appropriate time for the MIS team, however this resulted in the Committee receiving the final report with management response in the latter part of the autumn term.

The follow up review would also be ready for the next Committee meeting. A member asked Scott about liaison with the external auditors and where it was possible for them to seek some assurances around controls. Reference was made to the external audit strategy where the external auditors may triangulate for this purpose (Item 7).

ii) Internal review programme 24-25

Members considered the proposed annual plan for the next year. It had already been suggested, following discussions with the auditors, to bring Cyber Security forwards to the autumn term to allow the new IT Manager to be involved. The FD also recommended the inclusion of a Performance Management audit. The third option was either Procurement or Purchasing both of which would be impacted by the timing of the introduction of new finance software. It was suggested the third area be identified by the Committee in the autumn term. The FD was asked for a copy of the Internal Audit Plan and the recommendations to be circulated to the Committee to enable them to finalise the decision prior to endorsing to the Governing Body. *(Action: FD)*

Recommendation: The Governing Body agree the first two internal reviews (Cyber Security and Performance Management) in the internal audit review programme for 24-25 once circulated

[16.45 – Scott McCready was thanked for the updates and departed the meeting]

7. Financial Statements Preparation

Papers: External audit strategy ending 31 July 2024

The FD explained that there had recently been a planning meeting with the external auditor where there were a number of updates provided. It was confirmed that the legal aspect of Going Concern had been discussed in respect of academisation; subject to there being an academy order by the autumn term the auditor would provide some assurances to Governors on the differences between a financial Going Concern assessment.

In reference to sector developments a member asked about the curriculum review and T-Level overlap. It was confirmed that this wasn't significant to Collyer's due to the size of the provision.

Referring to page 8 of the strategy report, the Principal provided a brief update on the loan consent which would be delayed until after the election on 4 July.

8. Risk Management Annual report 23-24 update inc:

Papers: RMG minutes 20-05-24, College RR, external risks, Fraud Report, Anti-Fraud checklist

i)*RMG minutes 20 May 24

This was a consent item with the minutes provided for information. There were no further questions.

ii) College-wide Risks

The Principal reported that most of the scores remained the same, although the HR related risk scoring had moderated. Recruitment for example no longer presented such a challenge in most areas. In terms of H.5, members asked about the embedding and impact of the People Strategy on staff workload and staff wellbeing. The Principal said it was early stages, however it was anticipated that there would be a more noticeable improvement over the latter part of the term and into autumn.

The Principal provided some commentary for the remainder of the risks and in response to questions as follows:

- B.5 – there remained a challenging industrial environment and members were made aware of likely activity in the autumn term.
- C.2 – in respect of the discussion in Item 5, members queried how Ofsted ready some subjects were especially as the RAG rated assessment was still amber. The Principal reiterated the role of the external consultant, Dan Beale of FEA Consultants, who had been present on Strategy Day and would support the relevant subject areas although his advice would be generic as he was not planning to undertake deep dives. Ofsted would look for a targeted response plan for subject areas. It was agreed to revisit the language on management assurance in the Risk Register and explain the mitigations more fully.
- C.1 and C.2 – members suggested to the executives that perhaps some of the RAG ratings were too highly rated considering their overall impact and when compared to other risks.
- D.1 – following discussion and feedback from the Committee, it was agreed to add the Cyber Security audit under controls.
- F.1 – Members considered portakabins a contingency that was relevant to be included and reference should be made to the interim phase developments.
- P.1/P.2 – notably more manageable and improvements in attendance rates were positive.

iii) Potential External Risks

There was a focus in terms of PESTLE on political, economic and sociological. The Principal referred back to the significant gains in managing workload, although it was recognised that in implementing strategic workforce planning, additional pressures had been placed on SMT in the short term.

iv) Fraud Report

The indicators remained relevant. The FD reported that there had been no external fraud attempts this year, however the College remained vigilant and prepared for attacks. Members commented that during periods of organisation change, it was important to manage any potential weaknesses in internal controls and it was agreed to include academy conversion in next year's report.

v) Anti-fraud checklist (P16ACOP)

A recommended annual check as advised by the external auditors. The responses were noted and there was nothing unexpected.

9. Regularity Audit (self-assessment)

Paper: Self-assessment questionnaire

Members had checked the document and provided some specific areas for amendments that would be incorporated into the document prior to presentation to the Governing Body and signing by the Principal and Chair of Governors. On page 8 in the areas highlighted, it was agreed that the referrals to the ESFA should be documented for salary sacrifice schemes, which had since

been given the go ahead, and the loan where an application for consent would be submitted after the general election.

Recommendation: The Governing Body approve the Regulatory Self-Assessment at their next meeting.

10. AOB

None to record.

11. Annual Meeting Assessment inc ToR

The GD highlighted the proposed amendments to the ToR to ensure compliance with the new College Financial Handbook (effective 01-08-24) and the P16ACoP. One particular change was to report the Risk Register to the Governing Body termly which could be done via the Committee Chair update and then annually a full review with the Governing Body where it was decided to tie this into the SAR-QIP review process in the late autumn term meeting. The ToR would be included in GS&R papers and then endorsed to Governing Body.

Recommendation: The Governing Body approve the updated ToR at their next meeting.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee would next meet on: **Tuesday 26 November 2024, 8.00 on Teams.**

The Chair said a few words about retiring member Susan as it was her last Committee meeting. He wished to thank her on behalf of the Committee for her contributions.

The meeting closed at 17.36

Chair.....

Date.....

RRS 26-06-24